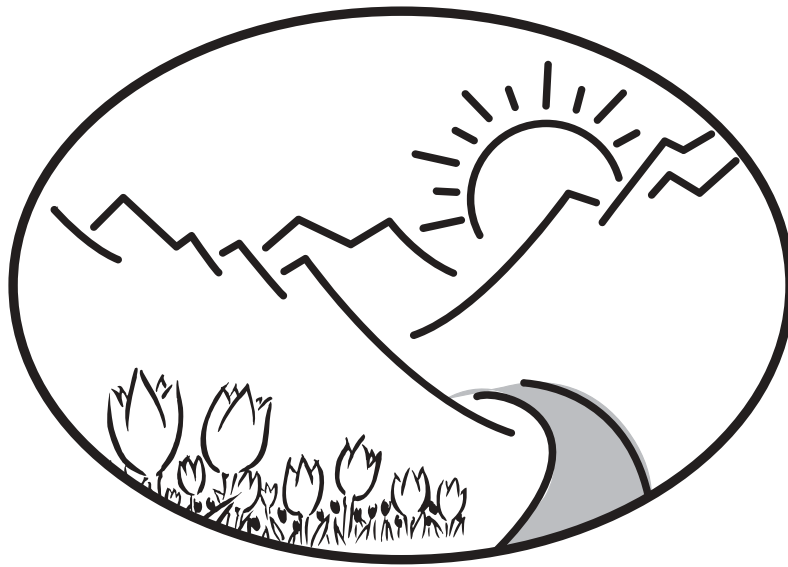


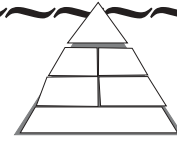
CREATING LIFE BALANCE



www.healthyutah.org

CREATING LIFE BALANCE...

Welcome!



February 2003

Dear Participant,

Welcome to the ***Creating Life Balance*** program. We're delighted you decided to join us!

There are no quick fixes to reduce stress. However, we can strive to create balance and harmony in our lives. The ***Creating Life Balance*** program is designed to help you get started on the journey toward a more balanced life. Using a tool called the **Life Balance Pyramid** (*see brochure included*), the program outlines ways that you can lead a more balanced lifestyle – at work and home, even at play.

Getting Started

Take the **Life Balance Assessment** found on page five to identify your current strengths and also the weaker areas that may be causing distress. This booklet contains weekly tips and information about the various areas of the **Life Balance Pyramid**. Use this booklet to identify your own strengths and learn new ways to explore life balance. To keep you motivated, we will send you additional ***Creating Life Balance*** information each week via email. At the end of the program, you will have the opportunity to assess your progress by taking the assessment again.

Drawings and Prizes

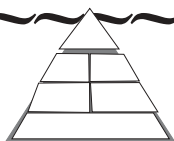
We have lots of great prizes to reward participation. In the ***Creating Life Balance*** email for Week 6, you will find a link to a **Program Evaluation Questionnaire***. Your comments are important to us, so please take time to fill out the evaluation. Even more importantly, submission of your evaluation will enter you in the prize raffle! Winners will be posted on the Healthy Utah website at www.healthyutah.org.

Please contact Healthy Utah if you have questions or comments. Good luck!

Regards,

The Healthy Utah Team

** Contact Healthy Utah if you do not have access to the Internet.*



CREATING LIFE BALANCE...

Table of Contents

Program Introduction.....3-4

Life Balance Assessment5-7

Week #1: February 3rd-9th

Immediate Coping Skills.....8-10

Week #2: February 10th-16th

Pleasurable Joys11-13

Week #3: February 17th-23rd

Physical Nourishment.....14-16

Week #4: February 24th - March 2nd

Emotional Well-Being17-20

Week #5: March 3rd - 9th

Social Connection.....21-23

Week #6: March 10th-16th

Lifelong Foundations24-26

Assessing Your Progress27-30

Resources31-33

CREATING LIFE BALANCE...

Program Introduction

In today's hectic world, stress cannot be eliminated, nor should it. Short-term stress, or acute stress, such as being stuck in traffic or striving to complete a task on time, can help us reach a goal or meet a deadline. However, long-term stress or chronic stress-prompted by relationship problems, too many demands, lack of job satisfaction or social isolation-can cause our bodies to break down. As a result, we may experience illness, pain or disease, or lack of fulfillment in our lives.

The Mind-Body Connection

Our mind and body work together. What goes on inside your head greatly affects your body's health. Our stress-particularly how we perceive events or situations-can create health problems such as headaches, back problems and illness. Our bodies mirror our inner thoughts, beliefs, and emotions. Every thought and belief we have can affect every cell in our body. So what we choose to believe and think can affect us physically as illness or help us heal.

For example, job dissatisfaction is a greater predictor of low back pain than any other risk factor. On the other hand, watching a video of kind acts, such as Mother Teresa

caring for the poor, has been shown to increase immune function.

Use the self-assessment quiz and the Life Balance Pyramid as tools to understanding your thoughts and beliefs. They can help you recognize certain beliefs and thoughts you hold and help you determine what you need to change.

Symptoms of Imbalance: How We Cope

How we cope with life's ups and downs indicates how balanced our lives are. Pursuing unhealthy behaviors is our attempt to survive and cope with chronic stress. If we are not equipped to deal with the stress in our lives, we find a way to cope. We may overeat, drink alcohol, feel anxious, blow up easily, or work too much. These behaviors are just a symptom. We need to step back and figure out what is causing us to cope in an unhealthy way.

During the next six weeks, as you explore different areas of the Life Balance Pyramid, notice any unhealthy behaviors your Life Balance Assessment revealed. Explore ways to work in those areas of need by practicing the suggestions in this booklet.

CREATING LIFE BALANCE...

Program Introduction

Living in Balance

Life balance is a proactive approach to easing stress. It's broader and more effective than stress management. Life balance is about the way you live, not just the things you do. It's an attitude about life that honors the connections among body, mind and spirit. Working toward life balance helps us uncover and understand the origins of our stress. It also helps us develop

positive coping skills so that we can become more resilient to stress.

Each week, take the opportunity to read and reflect upon the information in this booklet and other materials you receive during the program. After all, any step toward harmony and balance is a journey worth taking. The weekly tips will introduce you to different ideas. Additional resources can be found at the end of this booklet.

What Works at Work?

All areas of your life must be in sync to experience life balance. That includes balancing work, leisure time and family.

As you think about work and how much time you spend working or thinking about work, consider how it ranks in your life. Take a moment to list the three most important obligations in your life and what percentage of time you spend in each area.

Obligations	% of Time
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____

Is work in balance with your other obligations? Reflect on this as you explore the areas of the Life Balance Pyramid in the upcoming weeks.

CREATING LIFE BALANCE...

Life Balance Assessment

This self-assessment tool is designed to help you determine how well you cope with stress and to help you measure the balance in your life. Circle one response for each item, then tally your responses in each section. ***This assessment is just for you; you do not have to turn it in.***

IMMEDIATE COPING SKILLS

	Almost Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
I make time to relax or unwind.	1	2	3	4	5
I manage stressful situations by using coping skills such as deep breathing, positive self-talk and taking time away.	1	2	3	4	5
I consider myself to be a generally patient person (I can wait in lines or traffic without feeling tense).	1	2	3	4	5
I am able to work effectively by staying focused on the task at hand.	1	2	3	4	5
I manage my stress without overeating, smoking, exercising compulsively or drinking excessively.	1	2	3	4	5

_____ Subtotal Immediate Coping Skills

PLEASURABLE JOYS

	Almost Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
I find ways to add pleasure to my life (e.g., by watching a movie, listening to music, enjoying a warm bath or reading a good book).	1	2	3	4	5
Laughter is a part of my life both at work and at home.	1	2	3	4	5
I give and receive affection regularly (e.g., hugs and shoulder rubs).	1	2	3	4	5
I participate in recreational activities that are fun for me (e.g., playing cards, picnicking, gardening or sports).	1	2	3	4	5
I have enough energy to do the things I want to do.	1	2	3	4	5

_____ Subtotal Pleasurable Joys Skills

Continued on the next page...

CREATING LIFE BALANCE...

Life Balance Assessment

PHYSICAL NOURISHMENT

	Almost Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
I am physically active most days of the week.	1	2	3	4	5
I enjoy the physical activities I do.	1	2	3	4	5
I eat a variety of nutritious foods.	1	2	3	4	5
I get enough sleep and feel rested.	1	2	3	4	5
I am free of physical symptoms of stress (upset stomach, headache, back pain, fatigue, frequent colds or flu).	1	2	3	4	5

_____ Subtotal Physical Nourishment Skills

EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

	Almost Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
I am able to set limits without feeling guilty.	1	2	3	4	5
I express my feelings in honest, fair and direct ways.	1	2	3	4	5
I accept myself, including both my positive and negative traits.	1	2	3	4	5
I am able to put aside worries that I can do nothing about.	1	2	3	4	5
I am free of emotional symptoms of stress (feelings of anxiety, emotional withdrawal or irritability).	1	2	3	4	5

_____ Subtotal Emotional Well-Being Skills

Continued on the next page...

CREATING LIFE BALANCE...

Life Balance Assessment

SOCIAL CONNECTION

	Almost Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
I give and get support from friends or family members.	1	2	3	4	5
I spend quality time with family, friends and pets.	1	2	3	4	5
I give time or donations to causes that matter to me.	1	2	3	4	5
I do kind deeds for others.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel loved and supported.	1	2	3	4	5

_____ Subtotal Social Connection Skills

LIFELONG FOUNDATIONS

	Almost Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
I feel a sense of fulfillment from my work (paid or unpaid).	1	2	3	4	5
I feel satisfied with the number of hours I work.	1	2	3	4	5
I view life's challenges as opportunities.	1	2	3	4	5
I take time for self-reflection, meditation and prayer.	1	2	3	4	5
The choices I make in my life reflect my values and goals.	1	2	3	4	5

_____ Subtotal Lifelong Foundations Skills

Score Summary:

_____ Subtotal Immediate Coping Skills

_____ Subtotal Physical Nourishment

_____ Subtotal Pleasurable Joys

_____ Subtotal Emotional Well-Being

_____ Subtotal Social Connection

_____ Subtotal Lifelong Foundations

Scoring

Notice the subtotals in each section. Each section has a possible score of 25. A score close to 25 indicates that you are more balanced in that topic area. If you scored particularly low in a topic area, that area is causing you distress and may need some attention.

Pay special attention to the items for which you scored a 1 or 2. As you work toward achieving life balance, you will need to explore these areas further.

What Now?

Review the Life Balance Pyramid brochure. Each section of the quiz has a correlating section on the Pyramid. The Life Balance Pyramid will provide you with tools to help you restore a sense of well-being and balance in your life.

CREATING LIFE BALANCE...WEEK #1

Immediate Coping Skills

This week explores the top of the Life Balance Pyramid: Immediate Coping Skills. This area addresses those day-to-day stress emergencies—traffic jams, family disagreements, work overload, a screaming child, a confrontation at work. The suggestions at the top of the pyramid are quick and effective tools to help you ease your stress level and restore a sense of balance.

Skills to Try

This week, your goal is to try three of the following skills.

Deep Breathing

When we are stressed, our breathing becomes shallow, resulting in poor concentration, muscle tension and fatigue. Diaphragm breathing (or deep breathing) helps to lower heart rate, increase feelings of calmness, clear our thoughts, and increase creativity. Belly breathing is one of the quickest ways to feel a sense of calmness.

Try deep breathing (diaphragm breathing):

- Breathe deeply and slowly.
- Practice breathing so that your belly expands when you inhale and flattens when you exhale. Put your hand on your belly to feel the changes.
- Continue deep breathing until you feel a sense of calmness.

Positive Self-Talk

We all have a radio program playing inside our head. For many of us, this program is stuck on negative messages that play over and over (e.g., “I should have...,” “I am so stupid...”). We can change these negative messages to positive ones to influence the way we respect ourselves and relate to the world around us.

Practice positive self-talk:

- Begin by noticing the negative messages you say to yourself and others. Now change those negative thoughts to positive (Example: Change “I should have...” to “Next time I will ...”).
- Focus on positive ways to think and say things. Try some of these affirmations:
 - ~ I am learning to let go of worry. If I can do something I will; otherwise I'll let go.
 - ~ I am a valuable and unique person.
 - ~ I am worthy of others' respect.
 - ~ I will look at life optimistically.
 - ~ I am eager to accept new challenges. I am learning to be kind and forgiving to myself.

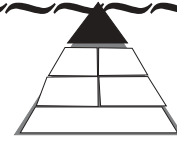
Envisioning a Pleasant Place

Take a mini-vacation getaway. Think about a favorite spot where you have been or would like to go.

Take a 5-minute vacation now:

- Close the door or go somewhere quiet.
- Close your eyes, take four deep breaths.
- Put yourself in a favorite spot: take a walk on the beach, feel the sand, smell the ocean, relax...

CREATING LIFE BALANCE...WEEK #1



Immediate Coping Skills

Self Massage

Massage will help you to relieve tension in tired or achy parts of your body, such as your head, feet and shoulders.

Try some of the following:

- **Temple release.** Place palms on your temples, with fingers meeting at top of head. Gently apply pressure to palms while massaging in a circular motion.
- **Trapezius press.** Reach across the front of your body to your opposite shoulder. In a circular motion, press firmly on the muscle above your shoulder blade.
- **Sinus-tension release.** Place your forefingers at the bridge of your nose then slowly slide them down your nose and across the top of your cheekbones to the outside of your eyes.

Take a Break

Get out of your immediate location and go anywhere! Take a walk, get a drink of water, say "hi" to someone-just get away for a moment-and then take time to reflect on the situation.

Muscle Relaxation

Muscle relaxation is a method of alternately tensing and relaxing muscles. This technique is designed to help you notice the difference between tense muscles and relaxed muscles.

Try muscle relaxation:

1. Sit or lie in a comfortable quiet place.
2. Take in several deep breaths.
3. Starting at your feet, tense the muscles; hold for a count of 4, then release. Feel the difference between a tight muscle and relaxed muscle.
4. Continue working up the body-upper legs, buttocks, chest, back and shoulders.
5. Focus on letting go of tension, and notice how you feel as your muscles relax.

Feeling the Outcomes

Once you have tried the skills listed, evaluate the results. Do you feel more calm, creative, balanced? How can you continue to add these into your daily routine? *Record your thoughts below.*

Tension is who you think you should be. Relaxation is who you are.

—Ancient Chinese proverb



CREATING LIFE BALANCE...WEEK #1

Immediate Coping Skills

What Works at Work?

Tired?

Close your eyes and envision a pleasant place. Take several deep breaths. A five-minute mental vacation can be very refreshing.

Have a tension headache?

Try some self-massage.

Feel like you're being taken for granted?

Use positive self-talk and affirmations.

Overwhelmed?

Take a moment to do deep breathing.

Nothing is right?

Take a break and get away. You'll come right back with a fresh perspective. The busier you are, the more important it is to give yourself a break.

You are so uptight you feel like you're going to snap.

Try some muscular relaxation and deep breathing. Release all that built up tension.



Pleasurable Joys

Within the Daily Supportive Activities section are four areas, each of which builds coping abilities to help you feel in balance emotionally and physically. This week explores Pleasurable Joys, which are activities that bring joy and satisfaction to our lives. Activities and events that bring us pleasure physiologically counteract the stress in our lives and help us to stay in balance. There are endless activities that may bring you joy-music, a good book, a funny joke, a massage, a night on the town, seeing a play, cuddling with your kids, whatever makes you feel good!

stress. Laughter is a form of “inner jogging.” A good belly laugh can relax muscles, improve circulation, lower blood pressure, promote creativity and just make life more enjoyable!

Ideas for adding humor to your life:

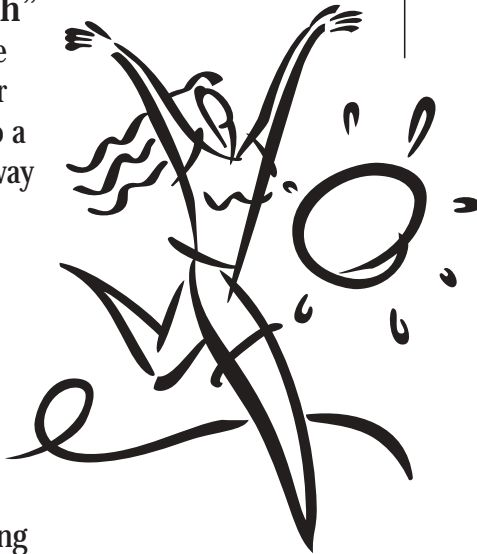
- Walk backwards.
- Tell a funny joke or laugh at one.
- Post funny cartoons and comic strips.
- Wear a silly watch, hat or tie.
- Doodle.
- Buy toys to keep at your work station.
- Enjoy an evening at a comedy club.
- Laugh at yourself and spend time with happy, funny people.

Activities to Try

This week, your goal is to try three of the following skills.

A Good “Belly Laugh”

A little humor can go a long way in



reducing

Having Some Fun

All work and no play is the perfect recipe for stress overload. Engaging in playful activities allows your brain to rest and release tension.

Ideas for adding play to your life:

- Build a sandcastle.
- Go to the zoo.
- Attend a parade.
- Tell stories.
- Play croquet.
- Go dancing.

Musical Harmony

Listening to music is a great way to relax, reenergize, lift a “blah” mood, or soothe



CREATING LIFE BALANCE...WEEK #2

Pleasurable Joys

frazzled nerves. Music can also distract us from unpleasant things by making us more tolerant. What type of music do you listen to when you are feeling down?

Happy? Tired?

Overwhelmed? By using music to calm or to energize, you can add balance to your life.



Ideas for using music to soothe:

- First listen to music that matches your mood, then switch to music that is more soothing. (If you are stressed, listening to soothing music right away may clash with your mood and create more stress).
- Listen to a variety of music to see how it affects your mood.

~ *How do you react to it?*

~ *Does it make you relax, tense up, feel happy?*

~ *Use the information you learn to help you cope with stress and add balance to your life.*

Soak Up Some Warmth

As pressure increases and our bodies tense, many people seek out warmth and for good reason. Research shows that positive changes occur in the body when it is exposed to short periods of warmth. Muscles relax, pain levels decrease and stress hormone levels decline.

To reduce tension...

- Take a warm bath.
- Spend time in the sun, being sure to properly protect yourself.
- Sit in a sauna or jacuzzi
- Lounge in front of a fire.
- Cuddle in a soft blanket.

Enjoy Soothing Scents

Smell can be linked to mood, memory, blood pressure, heart rate and breathing. Experiment with different fragrances to see if they affect your mood.

Everyone copes with stress in a different way. Use what works best for you.

Scents to try:

- Feeling tired? Try peppermint, sage or thyme.
- Need an energy boost? Try jasmine.
- Need calming? Try lavender, rose or clove.
- Looking for some vigor? Try lemon, geranium, rosemary or basil.





What Works at Work?

- Hang up funny cartoons, comics or pictures around your work area.
- Play soothing background music or take five-minute music breaks.
- Soak in the warmth of the sunshine during your break.
- Bring in some fresh flowers and enjoy their fragrance.
- Keep silly toys around to play with.



CREATING LIFE BALANCE...WEEK #3

Physical Nourishment

Within the Daily Supportive Activities section are four areas, each of which builds coping abilities to help you feel balanced emotionally and physically. This week we will explore Physical Nourishment, which encompasses three areas: physical activity, rest and nutrition. By taking care of these physical needs, we provide our bodies with nourishment to build our resistance—so we can quickly bounce back from stress and feel more vital.

Activities to Try

This week, your goal is to try three of the following skills.

Be Physically Active

To be healthy, our bodies need activity on a regular basis. Physical activity benefits the body, mind and spirit by helping relieve tension and stress, leaving you feeling refreshed and energized. Taking a quick 10-minute walk or climbing a flight of stairs can decrease muscle tension and energize you. Find forms of physical activity that you truly enjoy, then make them part of your life on a regular basis. Some examples:

- Yardwork
- Swimming
- Dancing
- Biking
- Walking

- Volleyball
- Yoga
- Hiking

The best activity is the one that keeps you moving because you enjoy doing it!

Get Enough Rest

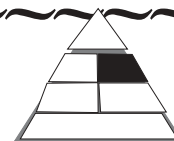
Sleep provides rest as well as a break from daily activities. Getting enough sleep on a regular basis adds balance to our lives. How much sleep do you really need? How much isn't as important as how well you function each day. If you feel rested and have enough energy most of the time, you are probably getting adequate sleep. If you are chronically tired and run down, you may not be getting enough restful sleep.

To feel better rested:

- Experiment with how much sleep you need to feel re-energized, then try to get it on a regular basis.
- Exercise regularly; it helps you sleep more soundly. (Note: Exercise is a stimulant, so avoid exercising before bedtime.)



- Avoid caffeine 6-8 hours before bed.
- Don't consume alcohol before bedtime. It may make you feel drowsy, but it will also make you sleep less soundly.



Physical Nourishment

- If you're often tired, even after getting adequate amounts of sleep, you may be going to bed feeling tense and stressed. Try practicing some type of relaxation before you go to bed. If worry is your problem, write down all of your worries or concerns so you can release them from your mind.
- Seek professional assistance if you have chronic sleep problems.

Eat Healthy

The kinds of foods we eat, how much food we eat, and our attitudes about food all affect our well-being and our ability to cope with stress.

To eat for well-being...

- Eat a wide range of foods – to ensure adequate nutrition so your body can function optimally.
- Listen to your hunger cues. Eat snacks or meals when you're hungry. Avoid skipping meals; it may lead to poor concentration, headaches and overeating.
- Recognize those times when you eat to calm yourself (emotional hunger). At times we may feel the need to turn to food to soothe ourselves when we are truly not hungry. If you notice this, try not to yell at yourself or restrict your eating (this can make the urge to eat even stronger). Simply notice

your mood and acknowledge the need to soothe yourself. Is there another way to nurture or soothe yourself other than food? Maybe you need some comfort or you are feeling the need to get away and relax (e.g., by talking to a friend, listening to music, going to a movie, or taking a warm bath).

- Eat consciously. Think about the last meal you ate. Did you fully enjoy it or were you focused on something else – conversation, work, TV? Being fully aware of what and how much you eat greatly enhances the eating experience and feelings of fulfillment. Feeling fulfilled makes us less likely to overeat, and that helps us function more effectively.

The journey of a thousand miles
begins with a single step.
—Ancient Chinese Proverb

To eat more consciously...

- Observe your food before you eat it.
- Be aware of each bite in your mouth.
- Slow down and enjoy every mouthful.
- Notice how fast and how much you are eating, and how your body feels in response to it.



CREATING LIFE BALANCE...WEEK #3

Physical Nourishment

What Works at Work?

***Fit
activity
into your
daily work
routine.***

- Take "walk" breaks.
- Change postures or stretch every 20-30 minutes.
- Deliver a message personally instead of calling or emailing.
- Go to a restroom further away.

Sleep.

- Leave work at work; worrying affects your sleep.
- Take a 5-minute "power" nap to rejuvenate yourself.
- Make it a priority to get enough sleep. You'll function more effectively throughout the day.

Follow good nutrition habits.

- Take time to eat!
- Pack a lunch the night before.
- Keep healthy snacks at work.
- Keep a large glass of water accessible.
- Eat when you are hungry.



Emotional Well-Being

Within the Daily Supportive Activities section are four areas, each of which builds coping abilities to help you feel balanced emotionally and physically. This week we will explore Emotional Well-Being, which is crucial to our sense of life balance. When you are able to express and gain control over your emotions and thoughts instead of being controlled by them, you can greatly enhance your life.

Activities to Try

This week, your goal is to try two of the following skills.

Enhance Your Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is the foundation for inner confidence, strength and the ability to get along with others. The messages we hear early in life, positive or negative, help form our self-image. Our level of self-esteem influences what we think and feel and how we act. When we feel good

about ourselves, we are better able to cope with stress. We also perceive events in a much more positive light.



To enhance self-worth...

- Accept yourself and others (both the positive and negative traits). Remember nobody is perfect.
- Learn to accept compliments.
- Get support when you need it.
- Replace a critical inner voice with a nurturing inner voice.

Express Feelings

Our culture supports positive emotions such as happy, excited and content. It discourages negative emotions such as frustration, anger, sadness and jealousy. But in order to live happy, healthy and fulfilling lives, we need to be able to feel and express a broad range of emotions, good or bad. For example, if you suppress feelings of anger for long periods of time, your risk for depression increases. You also may hurt someone you care about by expressing your frustrations in an explosive way. On the other hand, venting or trying to free yourself from an emotion may not release it and might fuel the emotion even more.

Try to be aware of your feelings.

- Allow yourself to feel the emotion. Accept it as OK.
- Try to understand where the emotion is coming from and why it has made you feel this way.



CREATING LIFE BALANCE...WEEK #4

Emotional Well-Being

- If you feel comfortable, discuss your feelings with someone you trust, or write in a journal.
- When you are ready, let go of the emotion.

Check Your Attitude

We have the ability to choose our attitude each day. Some people choose to be optimistic, others choose to be pessimistic, and some choose to be somewhere in between. Experts have shown that people with a pessimistic attitude have a more difficult time dealing with stressful events than those with a positive attitude. Optimism can improve mood, increase self-esteem, create a greater sense of well-being, and help you bounce back from stressful situations more easily.

Ways to become more of an optimist:

- Focus on the present moment—what is happening now.
- When faced with a tough situation, ask, “What can be done?” instead of “What can’t?”.
- Seek out optimistic people to help bring out the positive energy in you. Optimism is catchy.
- View life as being 10 percent what happens to you and 90 percent how you react to it.

Practice Assertive Communication

Assertiveness means standing up for yourself and expressing your feelings in honest, fair,

*No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.
—Eleanor Roosevelt*

and direct ways without denying the rights or feelings of others. It means being able to ask for what you want and set limits when you can't or don't want to do something. Some people confuse aggressive behavior with assertiveness. Assertiveness does not mean putting down others or achieving goals at someone else's expense. It means, “You and I are equally important and need to be heard.” Practicing assertive communication affects our happiness and makes us feel empowered.

Tips for increasing assertive communication- attacking the problem, not the person:

- Get across your message by using eye contact and a pleasant, but firm, voice.
- Describe your observations of the situation by explaining your perception as nonjudgmentally as you can.

CREATING LIFE BALANCE...WEEK #4



Emotional Well-Being

*Tips for increasing assertive communication
- continued...*

- Express your feelings using "I" statements ("I feel overwhelmed and need help" instead of "You never do your share of the work").
- Ask for what you want by stating what you would like the other person to do.
- Learn how to say no:
 - ~ Take some time before you answer.
 - ~ If you know a request is coming, rehearse your response.
 - ~ Say no politely without further explanation.
 - ~ Explain that you are busy...it is probably true!

- Make a list of all your worries to get them off your mind.
- Schedule a limited daily 'worry time' to deal with your list of worries.
- Learn to trust the flow and process of life.

Cut Down on Worry

We all have a tendency to worry now and again, but most of these worries are things that will likely never happen. Excessive worry takes away precious energy from the things we most value in life. If you find yourself worrying about something, stop and ask yourself if you have a genuine reason to worry. If you do, stop worrying and figure out what you can do about the situation. If you don't, stop worrying at that very moment.



To cut down on worry:



CREATING LIFE BALANCE...WEEK #4

Emotional Well-Being

What Works at Work?

Overwhelmed?

Ask for support
or back-up.

Frustrated with a coworker's actions?

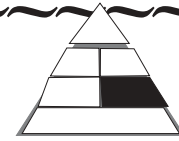
Address them in a
fair and direct way.

Worried about meeting a deadline?

Write down a timeline
for completing the project. If it's not
realistic, ask for help.

Feeling blue?

Ask yourself why.
What is causing you to feel that way?
Remember, there is always an open door; find it.



Social Connection

Within the Daily Supportive Activities section are four areas, each of which builds coping abilities to help you feel balanced emotionally and physically. This week we will explore Social Connection. The fast-paced culture of the information age seems to leave little time for close relationships and community involvement. What we must do is make time. People who feel supported and connected to others not only handle life's challenges with ease, they are also healthier.

Activities to Try

This week, your goal is to try two of the following skills.

Build a Support Network

Fulfilling and supportive relationships are an essential ingredient to good health and help to buffer stress. Everyone has challenges or difficulties in their lives. Turning to friends, family members or organizations for support helps us get through difficult times. When you need support, choose the person who best meets your needs (some people are great at providing physical support but are unable to give emotional support). Everyone feels unsupported once in a while, but if

you feel alone and isolated much of the time you may not be getting enough emotional and physical support from others.

Tips on enhancing your support network:

- Get involved in organizations or functions that interest you, such as a book club, school event, religious activity, or recreational league.
- Spend more time with friends. Nurture your connection with them.
- Go outside and talk to your neighbors instead of playing on the computer or watching TV.

Care for Others

Caring for others feels good. Feeling connected to someone or something outside of ourselves adds joy and well-being to our lives. Research shows that regularly helping or caring for someone or something is as important for our health as exercise and healthy eating. Caring for another person, a pet, or a plant helps us feel needed, responsible and connected to a larger world. These traits may particularly be lacking in people who feel alone and isolated.

To feel more connected...

- Own or help care for a pet. Pets can be a source of unconditional love, affection and companionship, and can help us feel safe.



CREATING LIFE BALANCE...WEEK #5

Social Connection

- Care for children-whether they are your children or children of friends or family. Children give us a sense that we matter and are needed, and help us to think about the world for the next generation.
- Care for the elderly; it brings out compassion, helps us feel needed, and encourages us to reflect upon our own values, beliefs and mortality.
- Care for plants; being responsible for how well they thrive, flourish and survive helps us feel needed.

Give to Important Causes

You can help yourself and others by giving time or money to humanitarian causes that matter to you. Generosity and service helps us feel a greater sense of community. The giving of our resources, time or money, helps us feel socially connected and increases satisfaction in our lives.

Finding ways to help:

- Choose something that you like to do, that you are good at, or that fits your goals and values. Once you start helping, you'll be motivated to do more.
- If you feel financial giving is more your style, plan and choose causes that are important for you. Sometimes it's easy to give to those who ask instead of choosing the causes that matter to you.
- Be aware of the charities you choose. Does the way they handle their business and their product or service match your values?

However you decide to contribute, focus on the process instead of the end result; otherwise, you may end up feeling like you aren't making a difference. Remember, every little bit helps.

Do Kind Deeds For Others

Doing something kind for someone without expecting anything in return can help overshadow this violent world and fill our soul with compassion and joy. Kindness is catchy. The more we are touched by it, the more we want to be kind to others.

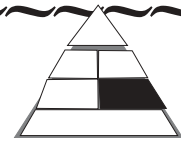
Some kind deeds:

- Plant a tree or flowers.
- Put your shopping cart back in its place.
- Hold the door open for someone.
- Pick up litter you find on the sidewalk.
- When someone is trying to merge into your lane, let them.
- Send someone a thank-you note for helping you out.
- Smile.
- Bring a cold drink to a neighbor doing yardwork on a hot day.

The list is endless...

The best way to cheer yourself up is to try to cheer somebody else up.

—Mark Twain



What Works at Work?

- Bring a coworker a cup of coffee or hot chocolate.
- Anonymously leave candy in everyone's mailbox.
- Recognize people "behind" the scenes (the mailroom, copy center or cleaning staff).
- Do a task for someone else.
- Volunteer to lead a charitable event at work.
- Offer to care for someone's plant while they are on vacation.
- Be there for someone in need.



CREATING LIFE BALANCE...WEEK #6

Lifelong Foundations

This area addresses long-term balance, which gives you a sense of peace and the ability to handle whatever life brings your way. All areas of the Life Balance Pyramid are important and need to work in harmony; however, Lifelong Foundations are the base of our existence and give meaning and purpose to our lives. Putting these concepts into practice helps you realize that all the guidance you really need for managing stress lies within yourself.

Foundations to Try

This week, your goal is to explore interests, find ways to grow, and set goals for improvement.

Meaning and Fulfillment From Work

Engaging in meaningful and fulfilling work (paid or unpaid) provides us with a sense of purpose through our contributions to the community and world. Work makes us feel valued and gives us the opportunity to use our skills and talents to create and accomplish something that makes a difference. Some people are fortunate to be able to get this satisfaction from their jobs (paid work). But others don't and need to rely on sources of satisfaction and fulfillment outside of their jobs

through other activities (such as hobbies, volunteering and family).

To help you reflect on meaning and fulfillment in your work, ask yourself the following:

- What am I really good at doing? What do I love to do? How do I want to make a difference?
- Do I get an opportunity to fulfill any of these things through what I currently do (job, family, hobby, volunteer work)?
- What changes in my work activities would I like to make after doing this reflection exercise?

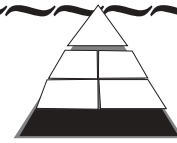
Enjoy Nature

In the midst of our "hurry-up" lives, we tend to become disconnected with the outside world and nature. Some say the overwhelming stress we experience today is, in part, caused by a disconnection from our natural element - the earth. Evidence shows that looking at natural scenes such as a waterfall or forest induces relaxation and positive emotions (such as kindness), and reduces feelings of fear and sadness.

Ways to reflect with nature:

- Plan a weekend camping adventure.
- Watch the cloud formations.
- Go on a picnic.
- Gaze at the stars.
- Observe wildlife in their natural habitat.
- Spend time in a local park or arboretum.

CREATING LIFE BALANCE...WEEK #6



Lifelong Foundations

- Take up bird watching.
- Observe a tranquil lake at sunset.
- Take a walk in the rain.
- Touch the earth. Build a sandcastle, walk barefoot in the grass, plant a garden.

View Life's Challenges as Opportunities

People who see life as a challenge, instead of a threat or series of hassles, have a greater sense of meaning in their lives. They are better able to deal with difficulties that come their way and as a result feel more balanced. These people realize that change is a part of life. They see it as an opportunity for growth and excitement. In fact, people who are constructively challenged are healthier.

Write down a challenge or difficulty you are experiencing right now in your life.

can you view this challenge as an opportunity instead of a threat?

What will you learn from this experience? Can you find meaning or purpose in this challenge?

Live in Sync with Your Values and Goals

Most of us have values and goals, but we get so wrapped up in our everyday lives that we aren't able to plan and move forward to fulfill these goals. When our personal and professional daily activities are in sync with our personal values and goals, we live in harmony and our life has meaning and purpose.

Above all, challenge yourself. You may well surprise yourself at what strength you have, what you can accomplish.
—Cecile M. Springer

How



CREATING LIFE BALANCE...WEEK #6

Lifelong Foundations

Try this **thought-provoking** exercise:

1. *Suppose for a moment that you have just won the lottery. Money no longer determines how you spend your time.*
2. *Now think about how you would want to spend your time. Prioritize each of the following areas of your life:*

- _____ Social endeavors (friends, community involvement)
- _____ Health and well-being
- _____ Personal time
- _____ Family
- _____ Spiritual (meaning and purpose)

3. *Are the priorities you set for yourself after the imaginary lottery the same ones that you have now? If not, why not?*

4. *Begin thinking of ways to make changes so that you'll be living according to your true values and goals. Although your reality may never be your "ideal," strive to get as close as you can. List at least three changes you will make to live more true to your values and goals.*



CREATING LIFE BALANCE...

Assess Your Life Balance

Several weeks ago, back when the Creating Life Balance program began, you took the self-assessment quiz below. Now, try taking the quiz again to see what progress you have made in creating a more balanced life. Circle one response for each item, then tally your responses for each section. ***You do not have to turn this in. This assessment is just for you.***

IMMEDIATE COPING SKILLS

	Almost Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
I make time to relax or unwind.	1	2	3	4	5
I manage stressful situations by using coping skills such as deep breathing, positive self-talk and taking time away.	1	2	3	4	5
I consider myself to be a generally patient person (I can wait in lines or traffic without feeling tense).	1	2	3	4	5
I am able to work effectively by staying focused on the task at hand.	1	2	3	4	5
I manage my stress without overeating, smoking, exercising compulsively or drinking excessively.	1	2	3	4	5

_____ Subtotal Immediate Coping Skills

PLEASURABLE JOYS

	Almost Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
I find ways to add pleasure to my life (e.g., by watching a movie, listening to music, enjoying a warm bath or reading a good book).	1	2	3	4	5
Laughter is a part of my life both at work and at home.	1	2	3	4	5
I give and receive affection regularly (e.g., hugs and shoulder rubs).	1	2	3	4	5
I participate in recreational activities that are fun for me (e.g., playing cards, picnicking, gardening or sports).	1	2	3	4	5
I have enough energy to do the things I want to do.	1	2	3	4	5

_____ Subtotal Pleasurable Joys Skills

Continued on the next page...

CREATING LIFE BALANCE...

Assess Your Life Balance

PHYSICAL NOURISHMENT

	Almost Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
I am physically active most days of the week.	1	2	3	4	5
I enjoy the physical activities I do.	1	2	3	4	5
I eat a variety of nutritious foods.	1	2	3	4	5
I get enough sleep and feel rested.	1	2	3	4	5
I am free of physical symptoms of stress (upset stomach, headache, back pain, fatigue, frequent colds or flu).	1	2	3	4	5

_____ Subtotal Physical Nourishment Skills

EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

	Almost Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
I am able to set limits without feeling guilty.	1	2	3	4	5
I express my feelings in honest, fair and direct ways.	1	2	3	4	5
I accept myself, including both my positive and negative traits.	1	2	3	4	5
I am able to put aside worries that I can do nothing about.	1	2	3	4	5
I am free of emotional symptoms of stress (feelings of anxiety, emotional withdrawal or irritability).	1	2	3	4	5

_____ Subtotal Emotional Well-Being Skills

Continued on the next page...

CREATING LIFE BALANCE...

Assess Your Life Balance

SOCIAL CONNECTION

	Almost Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
I give and get support from friends or family members.	1	2	3	4	5
I spend quality time with family, friends and pets.	1	2	3	4	5
I give time or donations to causes that matter to me.	1	2	3	4	5
I do kind deeds for others.	1	2	3	4	5
I feel loved and supported.	1	2	3	4	5

_____ Subtotal Social Connection Skills

LIFELONG FOUNDATIONS

	Almost Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
I feel a sense of fulfillment from my work (paid or unpaid).	1	2	3	4	5
I feel satisfied with the number of hours I work.	1	2	3	4	5
I view life's challenges as opportunities.	1	2	3	4	5
I take time for self-reflection, meditation and prayer.	1	2	3	4	5
The choices I make in my life reflect my values and goals.	1	2	3	4	5

_____ Subtotal Lifelong Foundations Skills

Score Summary:

_____ Subtotal Immediate Coping Skills

_____ Subtotal Emotional Well-Being

_____ Subtotal Physical Nourishment

_____ Subtotal Social Connection

_____ Subtotal Pleasurable Joys

_____ Subtotal Lifelong Foundation

CREATING LIFE BALANCE...

Assess Your Life Balance

Scoring

Notice the subtotals in each section. Each section has a possible score of 25. A score close to 25 indicates that you are more balanced in that topic area. If you scored particularly low in a topic area, that area is causing you distress and may need some attention.

What Now?

Compare your scores here with the self-assessment quiz you took several weeks ago. As a result of participating in this program, were you able to identify any difficulties or stressors in your life? If so, list them below. Notice any progress you have made with these difficulties or stressors.

Were you able to connect any stressors to any health issue or unhealthy way of coping you are currently experiencing? If so, explain.

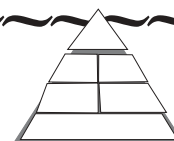
What will you do to continue to progress in the various life balance areas that need attention?

Life balance is not something you achieve and then move on; it's a continuous process. To continue to explore the various areas, refer back to this booklet or to the other resources listed on pages 31-33.

Don't forget

...to submit your online Program Evaluation Questionnaire by March 21 to qualify for the prize drawings! (see Week 6 e-mail for details)

Thank you for participating
in the
Creating Life Balance
program!



Resources

The journey toward life balance is a continuous process and should never end. The following references can help you along the way:

General Resources on the Mind-Body Connection

- Benson, H. and Stuart, E. ***The Wellness Book***. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1992.
- Goleman, D. and Gurin, J. (ed). ***Mind-Body Medicine: How to Use Your Mind for Better Health***. Yonkers, NY Consumer Reports Books, 1993.
- Sobel, D. and Ornstein, R. (eds.). ***Mind and Body Health Newsletter***. Cambridge, MA: The Institute for the Study of Human Knowledge. For subscription information, call 1-800-222-4745.
- Sobel, D. and Ornstein, R. ***The Healthy Mind, Healthy Body Handbook***. Los Altos, California, DRxz, 1996.

Immediate Coping Skills

- Davis, M.; Eshelman, E.; and McKay, M. ***The Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook***. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, 1995.

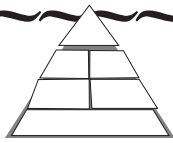
- Maxwell-Hudson, C. ***The Complete Book of Massage***. New York, NY: Random House, 1988.
- Williams, P. ***You Can't Afford the Luxury of a Negative Thought***. Los Angeles, CA: Prelude Press, 1995.
- Relaxation and imagery tapes can be checked out from the Healthy Utah Library or found at local libraries and bookstores.

Pleasurable Joys

- Klein, A. ***The Healing Power of Humor***. Los Angeles, CA: Jeremy P. Tarcher, Inc., 1989.
- Lavabre, M. ***Aromatherapy Workbook***. Rochester, VT: Healing Arts Press, 1990.
- McGee-Cooper, A. ***You Don't Have to Go Home from Work Exhausted***. New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1992.
- Ornstein, R. and Sobel, D. ***Healthy Pleasures***. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1989.

Physical Nourishment

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- Hirschmann, J. and Munter, C. ***When Women Stop Hating Their Bodies.*** New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 1995.
- Jeffers, S. ***Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway.*** New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 1988.
- Lerner, H.G. ***The Dance of Anger: A Woman's Guide to Changing the Patterns of Intimate Relationships.*** New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1985.
- Seligman, M. ***Learned Optimism: How to Change Your Mind and Your Life.*** New York, NY: Knopf, 1990.
- Tavis, C. ***Anger: The Misunderstood Emotion.*** New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1982.

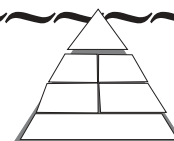
Emotional Well-Being

- Borysenko, J. ***Minding the Body, Mending the Mind.*** New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1989.
- Bower, S.A. and Bower, G.H. ***Asserting Yourself.*** Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing, 1991.
- Bradshaw, J. ***Creating Love: The Next Great Stage of Growth.*** New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1994.
- Branden, N. ***The Six Pillars of Self-Esteem.*** New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1994.
- Burns, D. ***The Feeling Good Handbook.*** New York: Plume, 1989.

Social Connection

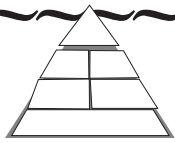
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- Conari Press (eds.). ***Random Acts of Kindness.*** Berkeley, CA: Conari Press, 1993.
- Gray, J. ***Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus.*** New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1992.
- Hendrix, H. ***Getting the Love You Want: A Guide for Couples.*** New York, NY: Harperperennial Libraries, 1998.

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Resources

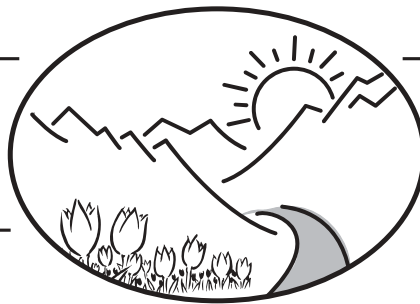
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 - McKay, M.; Davis, M.; and Fanning, P. ***Messages: The Communication Book***. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger, 1995.
 - Whitsett, G. ***Guerrilla Kindness: A Manual of Good Works, Kind Acts, and Thoughtful Deeds***. San Luis Obispo, CA: Impact Publishers, 1993.
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 - LeShan, L. ***How To Meditate: A Guide to Self Discovery***. Boston, MA: Little Brown & Co., 1974.
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 - Dossey, L. ***Prayer Is Good Medicine***. New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1996.
 - Elgin, D. ***Voluntary Simplicity: Toward a Way of Life That Is Outwardly Simple, Inwardly Rich***. New York, NY: William Morrow, 1993.
 - Frankl, V. ***Man's Search for Meaning***. New York, NY: Pocket Book, 1984.
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Notes

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